

# ATTACHMENT 2

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Office of the Press Secretary  
June 13, 2006

## Fact Sheet: Camp David Meetings: Building on Progress in Iraq

### In Focus: Renewal in Iraq

*"My message to the Iraqi people is this: seize the moment; seize this opportunity to develop a government of and by and for the people. And I also have a message to the Iraqi people that when America gives a commitment, America will keep its commitment."*

-- President Bush, 6/13/06

**The Unity Government in Iraq Is A New Opportunity For Progress.** Prime Minister Maliki has laid out his plan to advance his most pressing priorities in Iraq. And the events of last week – completing the formation of the government and eliminating the terrorist leader Zarqawi – mark significant progress toward realization of our shared goal of a free and peaceful Iraq that is an ally in the War on Terror.

- **This Week, The President Called Together His National Security Team And Other Key Members Of His Cabinet At Camp David To Build On That Progress And Ensure That The New Iraqi Government Succeeds.**

- **On Monday At Camp David:** General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad provided the President and his National Security team with an assessment of the opportunities and challenges in Iraq. The President and his advisors heard from outside experts with a range of views as to possible approaches to the economic, political, and security challenges that remain. On Monday afternoon, the President and his National Security team, including the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were joined by the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Agriculture, Energy, and Commerce for a discussion of the new Iraqi government's plans to address its most urgent challenges. The group assessed how best to align the efforts of the U.S. government to support the plans of Iraq's new government. Each of these agencies is engaged in helping advance the priorities of the new Iraqi government.
- **On Tuesday At Camp David:** With the President in Baghdad, the group was joined for breakfast Tuesday by Iraq's Ambassador to the U.S., Samir Sumaidaie. Following breakfast and earlier Baghdad meetings between the President and the Iraqi Prime Minister, the two leaders and the Iraqi cabinet met via secure teleconference. The Prime Minister discussed his top priorities for the new government, and he and members of his cabinet briefed the President and the U.S. team on Iraqi plans for improving security, national reconciliation, and economic reform. The President hailed the Prime Minister for the leadership he has shown and for laying out a bold agenda for Iraq. American and Iraqi leaders discussed how the U.S. government could best support the Prime Minister's agenda and together advance security and renewal in Iraq.

### **The Iraqi Government Has A Plan To Move Iraq Forward**

#### **Prime Minister Maliki Is Focused On Taking Immediate Actions In Three Areas:**

1. Improve security by both military and political actions; secure Baghdad; eliminate armed gangs; and promote national reconciliation and the rule of law.
2. Immediately build economic and government capacity; increase production of oil and electricity; and build a foundation for prosperity.

3. Engage the nations of the region and the world in Iraq's democratic and economic development.

**The President Discussed The New Iraqi Government's Plan In Detail With His National Security Team And Other Cabinet Officials.** They assessed ongoing U.S. efforts in each area of the Iraqi plan and directed adjustments to U.S. plans as necessary to fully align with the plans of the new government.

**We Continue To Comprehensively Work With The Iraqi Government To Build Security Forces, To Create The Government Institutions Necessary To Provide Essential Services To The People, And To Build The Institutions Of Democracy And Prosperity.**

**Examples Of Specific Actions The U.S. Government Will Take In The Short Term To Advance The Iraqi Government Plan**

**On Security And Reconciliation:**

**Securing Baghdad:** The Prime Minister has made the security of Baghdad his top priority. He has briefed the U.S. government on his campaign to crack down on the violence and at the same time promote reconciliation.

- **Coalition Action:** Prime Minister Maliki will soon announce more specifics of his plan to secure Baghdad. The President will provide, through the Commander, MNF-I, 12 battalions (approximately 7,200 troops) of Coalition forces in Baghdad to support 36 battalions of Iraqi Army forces (approximately 26,000) and nearly 23,000 Iraqi police who will work together to secure the city. Their goal will be to deny terrorists safe haven in areas around Baghdad and to deny terrorists freedom of movement in the city.

**Securing Ramadi:** Terrorists/insurgents have been focusing on destabilizing Ramadi, the provincial capital of Anbar, both to undermine the government in that province and as a transfer point and staging ground for attacks elsewhere.

- **Coalition Action:** Coalition forces are working with the Iraqi Government to stabilize the city by keeping the pressure on terrorists/insurgents while recruiting, training, and fielding Iraqi army units to serve in and around Ramadi. A locally recruited police force is also being built.

**Building Confidence In Iraq's Security Forces:** Prime Minister Maliki is committed to both increasing public confidence in Iraqi security forces and improving the ability of those forces to take the lead in and eventually responsibility for the security of Iraq.

- **Coalition Action:** The Coalition has embedded Transition Teams in Iraqi Police and Military units to assist in the professionalization of Iraqi Security Forces and to help them achieve Prime Minister Maliki's goals. These teams will also help inculcate ethical and professional standards. The Department of Defense has interagency advisory teams in place, working with the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior to build administrative capacity. Now that Iraq's new Ministers of Defense and Interior are in place, our advisory teams will assist them in building internal affairs bureaus, Inspector General functions, and other capabilities.

**Judicial Capacity:** Prime Minister Maliki recognizes that a secure and prosperous society requires a functioning and independent judiciary. A society needs courts, prosecutors, investigators, and correctional facilities to enforce the rule of law, deter violence, prosecute wrongdoers, and justly punish the guilty.

- **Coalition Action:** The State, Defense, and Justice Departments have produced a comprehensive rule of law initiative to build on past efforts to strengthen the Iraqi judicial system. The initiative builds on what has already been accomplished in the judicial sector with special emphasis on increasing the number of trained and qualified judges; ensuring those judges have adequate security to do their work; providing technical assistance to the Higher Juridical Council (which oversees the Iraqi judiciary); enhancing prison capacity to meet international standards; completing the training of Iraqi correctional personnel; and integrating the roles of police, courts, and prisons to act under one rule of law. In addition, we will be working with the European Union, the United Nations, and other international partners to provide technical assistance to Iraqi legislators as they work to complete important judiciary laws called for under Iraq's new constitution.

These initiatives are being developed in consultation with the Iraqi government and a comprehensive strategic plan will be presented to top Iraqi officials – including the Prime Minister and Iraq's Chief Justice – later this month.

**Bringing Armed Groups Under Control Of The Government:** The Prime Minister intends to develop a plan to ensure that no entities outside the Iraqi government wield force in Iraq. His strategy will involve enforcing existing laws against illegal armed groups and dedicating additional resources to ensure members of militias have an alternative means of supporting themselves and their families.

- **Coalition Action:** Coalition leaders are working with the new Iraqi government to implement a program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of militias and other illegal armed groups. To overcome these armed gangs, Iraqi forces must be better equipped than their adversaries and easily distinguishable from them. Multi-National Forces, working closely with the NATO Training Mission, are providing the training, mentoring, and equipment needed to stand up a professional, volunteer, trained, and equipped Iraqi Security Force capable of taking the lead for internal security and over time the lead for Iraq's entire security. The President directed General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad to coordinate with the new Ministers of Interior and Defense as well as provincial governments to determine what additional steps should be taken to ensure that Iraqi forces have a military edge over those they are fighting.

**Reconciliation:** Prime Minister Maliki has called on all Iraqis to overcome ethnic and sectarian differences and forge a new path as the free people of Iraq. The President congratulated him on his efforts to unify the Iraqi people, including the release of more than 2,500 detainees. The Prime Minister has said he will appoint a reconciliation committee to focus on resolving specific concerns of Iraq's diverse communities. The United Nations has a team in Baghdad focused on bridging divides and resolving differences between groups peacefully.

- **Coalition Action:** Any reconciliation effort must be Iraqi-led for it to succeed. At the same time, the United States is supporting the efforts of NGOs and other institutions to bring Iraqi leaders together with leaders from other countries, such as South Africa, so that Iraqis can benefit from the experience of others. We are also intensively engaged with countries in the region to urge them to reach out to Iraq's communities to encourage national dialogue, full participation in Iraq's political process, and the renunciation of violence. Finally, we welcome initiatives by other international bodies to provide forums to bring Iraqis together.

#### On Economic And Government Capacity-Building:

**Revitalized Economy:** The Prime Minister is committed to a policy of national revitalization. This demands the creation of a new economic framework that rewards innovation and investment and the removal of market distortions that abet smuggling and corruption. Today the President welcomed Prime Minister Maliki's plan to spur growth and create a better investment environment.

- **Coalition Action:** The President has asked the Treasury Department to send additional professionals to Iraq to provide technical support for creation of a public finance system that is accountable and transparent. The State Department will coordinate a broad effort to support an economic policy framework that enhances investment, job creation and growth. The President has also asked Secretary of Agriculture Michael Johanns to travel to Iraq to meet with his Department's counterparts and determine what additional actions the United States can take to help return Iraq to its former status as a breadbasket for the region.

**Oil And Electricity:** Insurgents and terrorists have tried to cripple Iraq's economy by crippling its oil industry. Prime Minister Maliki is committed to sustainable oil exports and improving the delivery of electricity.

- **Coalition Action:** The President has directed Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman and Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez to travel to Iraq and work with their counterparts to identify what further assistance from the U.S. government is needed to help the Iraqi government increase oil production and electricity generation. General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad will work with Iraq's new ministers to continue the effort to build rapid repair teams and to create new initiatives to protect key infrastructure nodes. We are providing resources and technical expertise to the Oil and Electricity ministries for the development of operation and management practices. We are working with the ministries on steps such as metering and the tagging of trucks to increase transparency and efficiency and reduce corruption in the oil

industry. We are encouraging other oil-producing countries, in particular Iraq's neighbors, to provide their technical expertise and know-how to help Iraq sustain and expand oil production and exports. And we are engaged with the Iraqis in refurbishing oil wells in the south to ensure predictable oil exports and increase Iraq's overall capacity.

### On Engaging The Nations Of The World In Iraq's Success:

**International Compact:** The international community has made pledges to support Iraq's fledgling democracy, but many are unfilled. It is time for the international community to meet its obligations. Prime Minister Maliki is asking international organizations to take the lead with his government in developing a compact between the international community and the Iraqi government and people. This compact will bind actions by Iraq to actions by other countries and international institutions, and make Iraq's success a shared objective and commitment. The Prime Minister envisions a compact in which Iraq will undertake a series of political, economic, and security steps in exchange for more robust political and financial support from the international community.

- **Coalition Action:** The President directed his Cabinet to work with the international community to build this compact with Iraq. The President designated Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Robert Kimmitt to lead these efforts. Deputy Secretary Kimmitt will be supported by State Department Counselor Philip Zelikow and other senior U.S. government officials. They will travel soon to the United Nations and then to Iraq for consultations, and then will travel – as necessary – to Europe, Asia and the Middle East to build support for the compact. This effort is expected to culminate in a conference later this year where the Iraqi government can lay out its commitments and engage the financial, technical, and other support of a broad group of nations to continue rebuilding its country.

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## Our Strategy for a Democratic Iraq

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By Nouri al-Maliki  
Friday, June 9, 2006; A23

BAGHDAD -- The completion of the national unity government Thursday in Iraq marks the starting point for repaying Iraqis' commitment to and thirst for democracy. We are at this juncture thanks to the bravery of the soldiers, police and citizens who have paid the highest price to give Iraq its freedom. Our national unity government will honor these sacrifices by pursuing an uncompromising agenda to deliver security and services to the Iraqi people and to combat rampant corruption.

This government will build on the additional momentum gained from the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in order to defeat terrorism and sectarianism and to deliver on the Iraqi people's hope of a united, stable and prosperous democracy by following a three-pronged strategy:



We will draw on the country's untapped workforce to kick-start extensive reconstruction, put into motion an initiative for genuine national reconciliation, and increase the intensity and efficacy of building the military and police. While some parts of the country have been very quiet and secure, this has not resulted in increased investment or reconstruction. Our government will correct this imbalance and develop the infrastructure and services in these more secure regions, making them a model for the rest of the country. We will mobilize the impressive energy and skills of Iraq's young population to invigorate the rebuilding effort.

This government will embark on a national reconciliation initiative, which is important if Iraqis are to begin to heal the divisions and wounds brought on by Saddam Hussein's dictatorial rule and further widened by terrorism. This, along with genuine cooperation among all of Iraq's ethnic and religious groupings in this national unity government, will allow us to pursue the terrorists with maximum force.

Baghdad is home to a quarter of Iraq's population and is its financial and political center. This government of national unity will launch an initiative to secure the capital and confront the ethnic cleansing that is taking place in many areas around it. We will meet head-on the armed gangs and terrorists who we believe constitute the main threat to security. Furthermore, we will develop and strengthen the country's intelligence services, which represent the best form of defense against terrorist bombings.

We believe we will soon reach a tipping point in our battle against the terrorists as Iraqi security services increase in size and capacity, taking more and more responsibility away from the multinational forces. Key to meeting this target is ensuring that current forces are properly equipped and competent to take over security, while at the same time enhancing and expanding the training program.

To provide the security Iraqis desire and deserve, it is imperative that we reestablish a state monopoly on weapons by putting an end to militias. This government will implement Law 91 to incorporate the militias into the national security services. Unlike previous efforts, this will be done in a way that ensures that militia members are identified at the start, dispersed to avoid any concentration of one group in a department or unit, and then monitored to ensure loyalty only to the state. In addition, we will engage with the political leaders of the militias to create the will to disband these groups.

While security represents the major impediment to reconstruction and the provision of essential services such as electricity, administrative corruption is also contributing to the problem and robbing Iraq of its wealth. We will fight corruption from the top down. We will revamp and strengthen our anti-corruption watchdog, the Commission for Public Integrity, and initiate necessary political, economic and civil reforms. This will include gradual reductions in government subsidies, which impede Iraq's economic recovery and abet corruption, coupled with the establishment of a social security program for the least privileged.

The political and economic reforms outlined here are guided by a common belief in democracy. Liberty is the essence of a democratic system, which is why I believe they must go hand in hand.

Finally, to achieve this vision, it is necessary that Iraq's neighbors not interfere in its internal matters. While some neighboring countries provided refuge for many Iraqis during the rule of the dictatorial Baathist regime, this does not give them a right to meddle in Iraq now or turn a blind eye to terrorists' operations.

Iraqis have elected a national unity government that will always put national interests ahead of sectarian or ethnic agendas. This government will support the judiciary in relentlessly pursuing the murderers and kidnappers who have blighted Iraqi society. With the help of the international community and regional partners, we will be able to defeat the terrorist groups in Iraq.

The scale of the task ahead is humbling. Iraqis have time and time again demonstrated their patience and perseverance in the face of many challenges. With our allies, we will also persevere to make Iraq a prosperous democracy in the heart of the Middle East.

*The writer is prime minister of the Republic of Iraq.*

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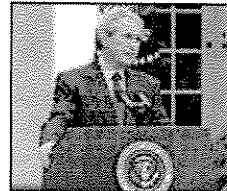
For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
June 14, 2006

## Press Conference of the President

The Rose Garden

9:45 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Thank you. I've just returned from Baghdad, and I was inspired to be able to visit the capital of a free and democratic Iraq.



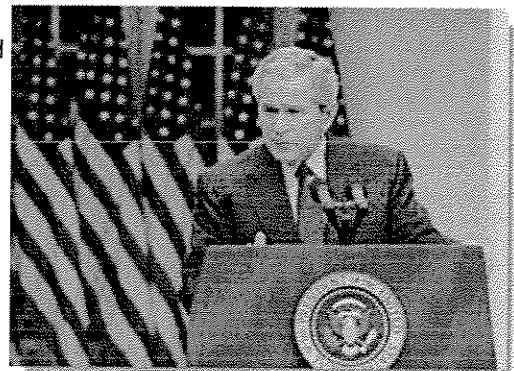
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President's Remarks

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It was a pleasure to meet face-to-face with the Prime Minister. I talked to him on the phone a couple of times, but I thought it was important to sit down with him and talk to him in person. I saw firsthand the strength of his character and his deep determination to succeed, to build a country that can sustain itself, govern itself, and defend itself.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with people who work for the U.S. government, our embassy staff, the intelligence community, and I had a chance to thank them. Theirs is a tough job, and they're far away from home and, obviously, they miss their families. And it was an honor to say to them, I appreciate their hard work and so do the American people.



And I met with our troops. I had a chance to congratulate those that were responsible for bringing Zarqawi to justice. You know, when you're in a theater like that, it's important to hear words of congratulations sometimes, to hear that their efforts are appreciated and doing hard work. And I got to do that.

General Casey briefed me on the operations that followed the death of Zarqawi. He told me that Iraqi and coalition forces are still on the offense, that they launched a series of raids on terrorist targets across Iraq. We've got new intelligence from those raids, which will enable us to continue to keep the pressure on the foreigners and local Iraqis that are killing innocent lives to stop the advance of a country that can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself.

Obviously, the raids aren't going to end terrorism. I understand that, and the American people understand that. And the Iraqi people understand that. But the terrorists are vulnerable, and we will strike their network and disrupt their operations and continue to bring their leaders to justice.

Prime Minister Maliki and I held a joint meeting of our two cabinets -- members of my Cabinet participating by video, some of whom were slightly surprised to see me from afar. I told the Prime Minister how impressed I was to meet the team he'd assembled. These are good people from different walks of life. I appreciated very much the agenda he's laid out. In other words, he's got a plan to succeed. And I appreciated their determination -- it's not just his determination, but their cabinet's determination to succeed. In other words, part of the success in Iraq depends upon the Iraqis and their will and their desire. The Iraqi people have expressed their desires, and now it's up to the government to follow through.

The Prime Minister briefed us on immediate steps he's taken in three key areas: to improve security, to build up the Iraqi economy so they can see -- the Iraqi people can see real progress, real economic progress -- and he's reaching out to the international community to help secure support for this new government. We discussed ways that my administration can help the Prime Minister accomplish these objectives. The policy of the United States government is to stand with this new government and help them succeed, and we will do what it takes to help

them succeed.

The Prime Minister is taking immediate action to implement a plan to improve security and his top priority is around Baghdad. Operation Together Forward started this morning. This operation is a joint effort to restore security and rule of law to high-risk areas in the capital city. It will be carried by some 26,000 Iraqi soldiers, some 23,000 Iraqi police, backed up by over 7,200 coalition forces. Iraqi troops will increase the number of checkpoints, enforce a curfew, and implement a strict weapons ban across the Iraqi capital. Baghdad is a city of more than 6.5 million residents, and we've got to recognize that it's going to take time for these operations to take hold.

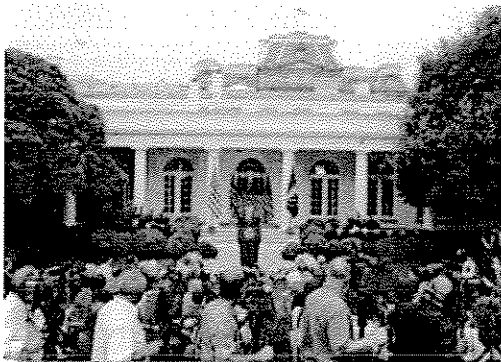


Iraqi and coalition forces are also working to restore security in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province. The Prime Minister's plan to bring militias and other armed groups under government control is moving forward, and we talked about that plan. He understands how important it is to rein in these militias. Many militia members will be demobilized and integrated into the Iraqi security forces, where they'll be dispersed among different units and, obviously, monitored closely by the government. I directed General Casey and our Ambassador to work with the Prime Minister on this really important effort, so he can make clear illegal militias have no future in a free Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki is working to build confidence in the Iraqi security forces, and he has a plan to do that. To assist him, we'll continue embedding coalition transition teams in Iraqi army and police units. We've deployed advisory teams to assist Iraq's new ministries of — Ministers of Defense and Interior, both of whom I met. We want to help them build the command and control capacity of their ministries. In other words, you can't have an effective army unless you've got command and control coming out of government.

We want to establish an internal affairs bureau, to root out corruption. No question this government has got to deal with corruption at all levels in order to earn the confidence of the people. And, of course, we will encourage them and help them investigate and punish human rights violations in order to earn the confidence of all Iraqis.

Part of the Prime Minister's plan is to improve the Iraqi judicial system. And to assist him, I've directed the Attorney General and the Secretaries of State and Defense to work together on a new rule of law initiative. Under this initiative, we'll help train Iraqi judges, increase security so they can do their jobs, improve Iraqi prison capacity, and help the Iraqi government provide equal justice for all its citizens.



Prime Minister Maliki is promoting reconciliation among the Iraqi people. And during my discussions with his cabinet and others, the concept of reconciliation kept coming up. People know they've got to reconcile the past in order to have a bright future. He told us he's going to soon appoint a reconciliation committee that will focus on resolving specific concerns of different Iraqi communities. We will support his efforts to bring the Iraqis together by encouraging leaders from countries like South Africa to share their experiences with this new government, to help them reconcile the past.

Secondly, the Prime Minister has a plan to revitalize the Iraqi economy. He understands that the people have got to feel benefits from the new government. I mean, it's a simple concept, but it's a profound one. I've directed our Secretary of Treasury and the Treasury Department to send teams of experts to Iraq to help the government create a public finance system that is accountable and transparent. These advisors will help Iraqis develop an economic framework that promotes growth and job creation and opportunity. I've directed the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture to travel to Iraq as soon as possible to meet with their counterparts.

To revitalize the Iraqi economy, the Prime Minister is working to increase oil and electricity production. We spent a lot of time talking about energy in Iraq. I reminded the government that that oil belongs to the Iraqi people, and the government has the responsibility to be good stewards of that valuable asset and valuable resource.

We have -- we're working with the Iraqi government on measures to protect key infrastructure from insurgent attacks. There's rapid repair teams that are being established that will quickly restore oil and electricity production if and when attacks do occur.

I've directed the Secretary of Energy to travel to Iraq to meet with his counterpart and identify ways we can provide additional support. It's up to the Iraqis to pass a hydrocarbon law, which they're now debating. It's up -- for the Iraqi government to decide what to do with the people's asset. Our advice is to be careful, and to develop it with the people's interest in mind.

Finally, the Prime Minister has taken immediate action to engage the international community, and we're going to help him. Earlier, the international community pledged about \$13 billion to help this new government and they've only paid about \$3 billion. And so we're going to help encourage those who've made a pledge to pay up to help the new government succeed. Plus, he's working to develop what he's calling an international compact. Under this compact, Iraq will take a series of steps in the political, economic and security areas. And then the international community will provide more robust political and economic support.

I told the Prime Minister I'll designate Deputy Treasury Secretary Bob Kimmitt to lead our efforts on behalf of our country and the people of this country. He'll be supported by State Department Counselor Phil Zelikow and other senior officials, and they will soon travel to the United Nations and then to Baghdad for consultations. And then they're going to travel across Europe and Asia and the Middle East to discuss the compact, and secure support from governments for this new government.

I was impressed with the Prime Minister, and I'm impressed by his team. I told him that America is a nation that meets its commitments and keeps its word. And that's what we're going to do in Iraq. It's in our interest that Iraq succeed. More importantly, it's in the interest of the Iraqi people. The challenges that remain are serious, and they will require more sacrifice and patience. And our efforts are well worth it.

By helping this new government succeed, we'll be closer to completing our mission, and the mission is to develop a country that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself, and a country that is an ally in the war on terror. We'll seize this moment of opportunity to help the Prime Minister. We'll defeat our common enemies. We'll help build a lasting democracy in the heart of the Middle East, and that will make Americans and Iraqis and the world more secure.

I'll now take your questions. Nedra.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You said yesterday that a standard of no violence in Iraq is an impossible standard to meet, but do you believe that there needs to be a reduction in violence for U.S. troops to begin to draw down? And if so, how much?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I said that if people say, well, there's got to be no violence in order for this to be a successful experience, then it's not going to happen. All that does is give the power of -- a handful of murderers to determine success. Obviously, we'd like violence to go down, and that's what the operation in Baghdad is intending to do, starting in the capital, is to reduce violence. And the reason why it's important for violence to be reduced, obviously, is, one, to save lives, but, two, give confidence to the Iraqi people that their government will be able to sustain itself and govern itself, and meet the needs of the people.

This is a tough struggle, and the reason why is because the rules of warfare as we used to know them are out the window. I mean, there's no rule of warfare. It's just, if you can kill innocent life in order to shake somebody's will or create consternation in a society, just go ahead and do it. And so it's a tough task, no question about it.

But I'm confident that this government will succeed in meeting that task. And the reason why I said that we shouldn't use the level of -- have a zero-violence expectation is because there are other measures to determine success, starting with political measures.

I mean, this is a government which is now a unity government, formed under a constitution that the people voted for. That's success. The question is, can this government sustain itself, and that -- one way to measure whether it can defend itself is through the strength of their army and their police. So that's what I said.

And the second part of your question?

Q Do you have a specific target for how much you want that violence to be reduced?

THE PRESIDENT: Enough for the government to succeed. In other words, the Iraqi people have got to have confidence in this unity government, and reduction in violence will enable the people to have confidence.

And you said something about troop levels. Our policy is stand up/stand down; as the Iraqis stand up, we'll stand down. But if we stand down too soon, it won't enable us to achieve our objectives. And we will support this Iraqi government -- that's what I went to tell them. We'll do what it takes to support them. And part of that support is the presence of coalition forces.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You expressed serious concern when you learned about the Guantanamo suicides, and you and your aides immediately called allies. I'm wondering, how concerned are you about the U.S. image abroad, based on this incident and the ongoing investigation in Haditha and Abu Ghraib and other incidents? And, also, why shouldn't Guantanamo be closed now?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd like to close Guantanamo, but I also recognize that we're holding some people that are darn dangerous, and that we better have a plan to deal with them in our courts. And the best way to handle -- in my judgment, handle these types of people is through our military courts. And that's why we're waiting on the Supreme Court to make a decision.

Part of closing Guantanamo is to send some folks back home, like we've been doing. And the State Department is in the process of encouraging countries to take the folks back. Of course, sometimes we get criticized for sending some people out of Guantanamo back to their home country because of the nature of the home country. It's a little bit of a Catch-22. But we're working through this.

No question, Guantanamo sends a signal to some of our friends -- provides an excuse, for example, to say the United States is not upholding the values that they're trying to encourage other countries to adhere to. And my answer to them is, is that we are a nation of laws and rule of law. These people have been picked up off the battlefield and they're very dangerous. And so we have that balance between customary justice, the typical system, and one that will be done in the military courts. And that's what we're waiting for.

Eventually, these people will have trials, and they will have counsel and they will be represented in a court of law. I say, "these people," those who are not sent back to their mother countries. You know, we've sent a lot of people home already. I don't think the American people know that, nor do the citizens of some of the countries that are concerned about Guantanamo.

You mentioned Abu Ghraib. No question, it's set a terrible example. I was asked at a press conference in the East Room with Tony Blair, mistakes. Abu Ghraib was a terrible mistake. I was asked that question, by the way, about Abu -- very same question you asked by a member of the Iraqi cabinet. And I told her, I said that where there's allegations, we will investigate. And I reminded her that ours is a transparent society where people will see and follow these investigations, and people will be held to account according to our laws.

But I also want the people to understand here and around the world that 99.9 percent of our troops are honorable, decent people who are serving our country under difficult conditions, and I'm proud of them. I'm proud of the United States military. And that's a message our military and their families must consistently hear, that they're doing fine work. I understand the politics and all that. But I'm going to continue to remind them that, set politics aside, this nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

So we'll deal with these incidents, and we'll deal with them in an up-front way. But I'm not going to let these incidents stain the reputation of our military. They're good people. They really are.

Yes, sir. Roger.

Q Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Roger, Roger.

Q Thank you, sir. Mr. President, you've said that you trust the markets to guide you, but stock and bond markets are telling us that inflation is a growing concern. Is there a threat that inflation is going to derail the economic expansion?

THE PRESIDENT: There are a lot of indicators about the strength of our economy, starting with job creation, productivity increases, small -- the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. There's a lot of positive things. And obviously, the Fed is watching the signals for inflation very carefully. They'll make decisions independent of the White House.

On fiscal policy, though, I would strongly urge the Congress to recognize why we have grown the way we have grown, why we're -- have got strong economic growth in the first quarter of this year, why we've added over 5 million new jobs in a -- in two-and-three-quarters years, and that's because the tax cuts are working, and they need to make the tax cuts permanent. Pro-growth economic policies work. And that's why I've been calling for permanence in the tax code.

And so there will be monetary policy -- we'll pay attention very carefully to signs, inflationary signs. That's Ben Bernanke's job. Our job is to work with Congress to have wise fiscal policy. And wise fiscal policy means not only keeping revenues low, but it also means being wise about how we spend the people's money. I called Chairman Lewis this morning to congratulate him on getting a good supplemental out of the House of Representatives. It's a supplemental that meets our numbers, and meets the requirements for a good bill. And evidently, it's going to be voted on in the Senate here pretty quick, and I look forward to signing that piece of legislation, should it make it to my desk.

Let's see here. Jake Tapper. Yes, filling in, huh?

Q How are you doing, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm doing all right. A little jet-lagged, as I'm sure you can imagine -- nearly 60.

Q I can, sir. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not sure you possibly can empathize, but nevertheless --

Q Jet lag, I understand jet lag.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good.

Q What are your feelings about discussions in the new Iraqi government of amnesty for insurgents? And regarding the oil resources in Iraq that you discussed, do you support guaranteeing the Sunnis a percentage of the oil profits, either through a new law, or through a constitutional provision?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's not a bad question for a substitute guy. (Laughter.) I believe that the Iraqi government -- first of all, the decision on what to do with their resources is their decision, not mine. And so, this is advisory. These are people that are elected and under a constitution. My advice to them is to use their energy assets as a way to unite the country. And by that, I mean that people will have -- they may not have oil resources in their provinces, but they would have a stake in how the resources are developed elsewhere in the country.

One option I laid out the other day for them to consider -- I must confess, this isn't probably the best way to convince a government to do something, is to put it out through the press -- but I did suggest a royalty trust on behalf of the Iraqi people. Other countries have tried that; the state of Alaska has tried that. To me, it's an interesting idea for them to consider, to basically say that no matter where you live in the country, you have a stake in the future of your country because of your ownership in energy assets.

The other part of the question?

Q Possible amnesty for insurgents.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- I talked to the Prime Minister about -- his question is, possible amnesty. The Prime Minister I think would say "reconciliation." This is an issue that is on the minds of a lot of the folks there in Iraq. In other words, they're trying to figure out how to reconcile an ugly past with a hopeful future. And part of that is reconciliation. I'm not exactly sure how you would -- what you mean by -- if somebody has committed a crime, I don't know whether or not they'll be that lenient, frankly.

But I do recognize that -- I mean, they recognize that, for example, Baath Party membership in order to secure a job or to be able to get an advanced degree should be a part -- shouldn't be held against a person. And I think they're willing to balance the difference between terror and -- "expediency" isn't the right word, but terror and membership of a party to advance one's life. And I was impressed. I was impressed by their -- the sophisticated nature of that discussion and their recognition that it's really important to do the best they can to reconcile the past.

One of the things I was looking for was -- first of all, I'm convinced this government will succeed. And one of the reasons I am is because there is a sense of hopefulness. If you're a person stuck in the past, you tend to be bitter and look for ways to seek revenge. I didn't sense that. I did have a strong sense that they're really happy to get rid of Saddam Hussein, to a person. They believe he wrecked their country in more ways than one. It was clear he wrecked their infrastructure. And it is clear that he wrecked a lot of lives. But I didn't have that great sense of people being so bound up in bitterness that they weren't willing to think positively about the future. And I think that's important. I really do.

Gregory, fine-looking scarf -- not scarf, what do you call that thing?

Q Thank you, very much.

THE PRESIDENT: It's strong.

Q Thank you. (Laughter.) Mr. President, you've made a public point recently of soliciting outside advice about the way forward in Iraq and retooling your strategy. I wonder, what idea from a critic or somebody outside your administration that you've concluded should be part of the strategy going forward?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think -- I've gotten a lot of advice from people. You know, one of the interesting debates from the outside community is troop levels. I've got people who say, you need to increase the number of forces -- now. I've gotten people that said, well, the role of the United States ought to be more indirect than it has been, in other words, in a supporting role. To those folks, I say, look, I'm going to rely upon General Casey. But I did share with him the philosophies that were reflected in a conversation we had over lunch at Camp David.

I've had people come in and say, you'd better make sure that the Iraqi forces are well-tooled to do their job -- in other words, people who have gone over there and taken a hard look have felt like that the Iraqi forces were not equipped well enough to be able to stand up, as we stand down. I asked that question of General Casey, and the area where he agrees with the critics is that they don't quite have the capability to move themselves around the country. In other words, they need more mobility. And he recognizes that, and is working toward an Iraqi army that has more mobility.

Obviously, there has been criticism about our reconstruction plan, that we started with big projects, that were sometimes blown up or sometimes didn't get off the ground like we'd hoped. And that's why we morphed a lot of our aid into a PRT approach, where local commanders had the capacity to get money out more quickly.

But I appreciate people's advice, and I appreciate their candor. I am going to meet this afternoon with a group of folks put together by The Peace Institute. They're going to take a look at Iraq. And the reason I bring that up to you is that it's important for people to share their advice with this administration. It's an important business. And it's not easy. It's a complex task to help a society go from tyranny to freedom.

But the American people have got to understand I believe we're going to succeed. That's why we're there. And my message to the Iraqis is, we're going to help you succeed. My message to the enemy is, don't count on us leaving

before we succeed. My message to our troops is, we support you 100 percent. Keep doing what you're doing. And my message to the critics is, is that we listen very carefully and adjust when needed to adjust.

This policy will be driven by the people on the ground. Those are the folks who are going to ultimately make the recommendation that I'll accept. It's important to get advice; I share the advice with our commanders and with Zal. They're the folks who are right there. These are very competent, capable people who understand the Iraqi situation well. And their judgment is important, and I listen very carefully to it, along the same way.

Sheryl. Welcome. Got a couple of newcomers today, sitting next to Tapper.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I'm pleased to be here. Mr. President, polls show that the public thinks Democrats can do a better job of running the country than Republicans. Are you concerned that Republicans will lose control of Congress in November? And do you think there's anything you could have done differently to put them in a better position, coming up in the midterms?

THE PRESIDENT: I remember 2004. At one point, people -- you would have stood up and said, you know, there's no way you can get reelected, if you had been listening to those polls. I can't remember, I was probably down double digits at some point. And they said, how can you possibly stand here and tell us you're going to get reelected. Listen, the elections are a long way off. What's going to matter is who has got the plan that will enable us to succeed in Iraq and keep the economy growing. And I look forward to the campaign. And I believe we're going to hold the House and the Senate, because our philosophy is one that is forward-looking and optimistic and has worked. We've got a record to run on.

There's an interesting debate in the Democrat Party about how quick to pull out of Iraq. Pulling out of Iraq before we accomplish the mission will make the world a more dangerous place. It's bad policy. I know it may sound good politically; it will endanger our country to pull out of Iraq before we accomplish the mission.

See, Iraq is a part of the global war on terror. It's not "the" global war on terror, it's a theater in the global war on terror. And if we fail in Iraq, it's going to embolden al Qaeda types. It will weaken the resolve of moderate nations to stand up to the Islamic fascists. It will cause people to lose their nerve and not stay strong.

And so I look forward to taking the debate -- that's not quite right -- kind of getting warmed up as a result of your question -- the timing is not right for me to get out there yet. But I think the Democrat economic policy of raising people's taxes isn't going to work either. I know they'll couch it in all kinds of language, but really what they're saying is we're going to raise your taxes.

So, you know, Sheryl, thanks for your question. I don't necessarily buy your premise. I feel confident we will hold the House and the Senate.

Let's see here. Peter.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, when you ran for office for the first time, you said you would hold the White House to a higher ethical standard. Even if Karl Rove did nothing illegal, I wonder whether you can say now whether you approve of his conduct in the CIA leak episode, and do you believe he owes Scott McClellan or anyone else an apology for misleading them?

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate the job that the prosecutor did. I thought he conducted himself well in this investigation. He took a very thorough, long look at allegations and rumors. And I, obviously, along with others in the White House, took a sigh of relief when he made the decision he made. And now we're going to move forward. And I trust Karl Rove, and he's an integral part of my team.

There's an ongoing trial, Peter, and I know the temptation is -- not the temptation, you'll keep asking questions during the course of the trial -- we're not going to comment beyond that.

Yes. Jim Axelrod.

Q Good morning, Mr. President. You seem quite energized by this moment of opportunity.



THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm just fighting off fatigue.

Q I know the feeling, sir. I'm wondering, though, if there are ever moments of doubt about your decisions and strategy in Iraq. Do you ever have a moment where you feel this just won't end well, that no matter how many Zarqawis are killed, the insurgents are just never going to give up?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, one of the reasons I went to Iraq was to be able to sit down with an Iraqi government to determine whether or not they have the will to succeed.

Success in Iraq depends upon the Iraqis. If the Iraqis don't have the will to succeed, they're not going to succeed. We can have all the will we want, I can have all the confidence in the ability for us to bring people to justice, but if they choose not to take the -- make the hard decisions and to implement a plan, they're not going to make it. And so, one of the things I went to Iraq to do was to, as best as I possibly can, expel any doubt in my mind as to whether or not we have a partner that is going to do the hard work.

One of the interesting things that -- and by the way, I believe we will have a partner to do the hard work. I made it clear to the government there that it's up to them to succeed. It's really up to them to put a plan in place and execute it. We'll help, but it's -- they were elected by the people, they're living under a constitution that the people endorsed, and they have to follow through.

And that's why I was most interested in hearing the Prime Minister's plans on electricity and energy and security. As I mentioned to you, there's an operation now going on in Baghdad that he helped put together, that we're helping him on. He recognizes that the capital city of a country sends important signals to the rest of the country -- the security of the capital city -- to the country and the world. He knows that. And that's why he has worked out a robust plan, with our help.

And so doubts about whether or not this government can -- has got the will to go forward was expelled. That's why I went. In other words, sitting here in America, wondering whether or not these people have got what it takes can create uncertainty. I've eliminated that uncertainty. I was able to sit with the man and talk to him.

I was also pleased to meet with his cabinet. You might remember, it wasn't all that long ago that there were some doubts in people's minds as to whether or not this government had the capacity to put a unity government -- as a matter of fact, there was doubts after the first election as to whether or not a portion of the population would even participate in the elections. And last December a lot of folks voted, from all different aspects of society, and the government reflects that. And that was important for me to see firsthand, as well.

The enemy has an advantage in this war, because they can get on our TV screens every day. And, of course, it upsets me when I see the loss of innocent life, and it upsets me to know that our servicemen and women are losing their lives. I'm like most Americans, it is -- death affects my way of thinking. But I also understand the stakes of this war, see. I understand how important it is to defeat the enemy. Now, I recognize some in the country don't feel that same sense of urgency I do. But al Qaeda is real; their philosophy is a real philosophy; they have ambitions. Their stated goal is to drive us out of Iraq before a government can defend itself and govern itself and sustain itself, so they can have safe haven from which to launch further attacks. And my most important job is to protect the American people from harm. And I understand the stakes of this war. And I understand this battlefield in Iraq.

And I want to repeat something: Iraq is not the only part of this war. It's an essential part, but it's not the only part of the war on terror. And so the decisions I make are all aimed at protecting the American people, and understanding the vast stakes involved. If the United States of America leaves before this Iraqi government can defend itself and sustain itself and govern itself, it will be a major blow in the war on terror. Al Qaeda will benefit. And make no mistake about it, they still want to do innocent people harm, whether it be in the Middle East, or whether it be here in the United States of America. The stakes are high in Iraq.

And my trip over there gave me confidence that we have a partner that is capable of setting priority and developing a plan to meet those priorities, and then following through to see that those priorities are met. And my assurances to him were, you get good plans and you have the desire to follow through, we'll help you, we'll help you. We will do what it takes to help you succeed. It's in our national interest to do so.

Let's see here. Brett.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Could you characterize the worry you heard from Iraqi leaders about U.S. troop levels that you first mentioned on the flight home from Iraq? And here in the Rose Garden a week ago, you said that Zarqawi's death is an opportunity for Iraq's new government to turn the tide in this struggle. After your visit, do you truly believe that the tide is turning in Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT: First part of the question? I'm sorry.

Q About the worry that you --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. No question, there are concerns about whether or not the United States will stand with this government. And I can understand why. You know, ours is a society that encourages debate and people are free to express themselves. And they do so; they say, look, this is my view of how we ought to go forward, this is what I think. And the willingness of some to say that if we're in power we'll withdraw on a set timetable concerns people in Iraq, because they understand our coalition forces provide a sense of stability, so they can address old wrongs and develop their strategy and plan to move forward. They need our help and they recognize that. And so they are concerned about that.

And I'm concerned that an enemy will hear the wrong message. And then I'm also concerned that there are people inside Iraq who have yet to make up their mind as to whether or not they want to help this government succeed, or maybe, or just maybe America will lose its nerve and, therefore, something else, a new team may show up. And so I made it very clear to the Iraqis, and I'm going to make it clear to them again right here that we're going -- we'll stay with them and help them succeed.

I know there is a lot of discussion about troop levels. Those troop levels will be decided upon by General Casey. He will make the recommendations, in consultation with an Iraqi government. But whatever decision General Casey makes, the message is going to be, we stand with you. In other words, if you're more capable it requires less troops, but nevertheless, we're still with you.

Other part?

Q Is the tide turning in Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT: I think -- tide turning -- see, as I remember -- I was raised in the desert, but tides kind of -- it's easy to see a tide turn -- did I say those words?

Q (Inaudible) --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I probably ought to then reflect on those words and think that -- I sense something different happening in Iraq. The progress will be steady toward a goal that has clearly been defined. In other words, I hope there's not an expectation from people that, all of a sudden, there's going to be zero violence -- in other words, it's just not going to be the case. On the other hand, I do think we'll be able to measure progress. You can measure progress in capacity of Iraqi units. You can measure progress in megawatts of electricity delivered. You can measure progress in terms of oil sold on the market on behalf of the Iraqi people. There's ways to determine whether or not this government's plans are succeeding.

But I know there's a tangible difference between the government that is now in place and previous governments, and the reason why is because this is a government that's formed under elections and a constitution. And it's a unity government. And so people have a sense of -- they're pulling for their government to succeed. And the reason why is, by far, the vast majority of Iraqis want a normal life. They want their children to be able to go out in the street and play. They want there to be a good education system. They want to be able to have their business - their little storefront business flourish without fear of bombing. That's what they want.

And so they're pulling for this government to succeed. And it's a government that they elected. It's not a government that we appointed, it's a government that they elected. They have a vital stake in the future of this government. And so there is a noticeable change. And whoever said it's a tide turning, and all that needs -- never

mind. (Laughter.)

Elaine.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. What kind of signal do you think it sends to the Iraqi people that your administration notified the leader of Iraq's sovereign government only five minutes beforehand of your arrival? And was there a specific security concern about either Prime Minister Maliki's inner circle or others that led you to make that decision?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think -- look, it's a security concern because I'm a high-value target for some. And Iraq is a dangerous place. The American people have got to know that I will take precautions when I travel somewhere. I'm not going to put our government at risk to achieve a very important trip. And, therefore, we were -- a lot of people didn't know about it. Half my Cabinet didn't know about it. Does that mean I'm going to run them off? No, I just -- we want to make sure we're extra secret about this deal. And the reason why is Iraq is dangerous. It's a dangerous place. And I think if there was ample notification that I was coming, perhaps it would have given somebody a chance to plan, and we just didn't want to take that risk.

There is no question about Prime Minister Maliki's -- when he walked in, I never -- I didn't fear. I was happy to see him, and he was happy to see me. But you should expect the President to be -- to take precaution -- I take precaution when I go somewhere here in the United States. Obviously, not to that extent, but nevertheless, we're careful. And that's what the people expect, us to be careful.

I appreciate the efforts that went into this trip. There are a lot of people that worked hard to make sure this worked. And it worked well. It was a good trip. And it was an exciting trip, by the way. I was up there in the cockpit of that airplane coming into Baghdad, watching Colonel Tillman steer us in. It was -- it was an unbelievable, unbelievable feeling. And walking into that ballroom there in Saddam's old palace, to see our -- see our people on the front lines of changing history was an exciting moment for me. It's a thrill to be able to shake their hands, and look them in the eye and tell them America appreciates what they're doing. I really, really appreciated the fact that I was able to go and -- no matter how secret it was.

McKinnon.

Q Thank you, sir. You just mentioned that you think the United States will be able to measure progress in terms of electricity and oil and violence. And I'm wondering if you can say how you're going to measure that in terms of time. In other words, are you going to put a six-month time frame on this, or a 12-month time frame on this?

THE PRESIDENT: John, I know -- look, I understand the pressures to put timetables out there on everything. And my answer to you is, is that we will work with the Iraqi government to do what's realistic. And the people on the ground will help me understand what is realistic. We will know whether or not the government is capable of following through because we're going to help them follow through.

The answer to electricity is, sooner the better. It's hot over there, and it would be helpful if people had the capacity to cool their homes. It would be a pretty good signal that the government is making a difference in somebody's life.

There are certain projects that are easier to achieve than others. Fixing the infrastructure of the northern Iraq oil fields is going to be more difficult to do. It's old, it's tired, it's been destroyed by an enemy, and it's going to take a while to get that done. And so we've got to be realistic with this government. There is a -- but, nevertheless, I do believe that it makes sense to develop with them benchmarks, so we can measure progress. And once those are in place, and to the extent they are, we'll be glad to share them with you.

Part of my visit yesterday was a strategy session, to sit down with a partner, Prime Minister Maliki, to figure out how to move forward, to listen to his plans, and how we can help his plans. The important thing for me to hear from him is, here's what I intend to do, he says; not, here's what we want you to do, like the oil suggestion. I really meant what I said, it was just a suggestion. It wasn't, you must do this. And same with the electricity. And he made a point to have his Electricity Minister brief my Cabinet, because he wanted us to know that he has a plan to put in place. The guy, by the way, said, I need your help. And we'll provide the help as best as we can.

You know, the ultimate judge about whether this government is making a difference is going to be the Iraqi people, and these elected officials know that. That's the great thing about being elected; you get a sense if people don't kind of like what you're doing, or not. And democracy causes you to respond to the people's needs. Tyrants don't have to. They don't have -- sometimes they may have to, but they always have got kind of an interesting way of helping suppress dissent. This elected government is going to have to respond to the people, and that's a big change.

Remember that Saddam did a really good job of milking the society to keep himself in power. In other words, the infrastructure is destroyed, or a lot of it is destroyed and dilapidated. We heard that over and over again in Baghdad. People said, you've got to understand how backward we are, compared to where we want to be. And he divided society and pitted people against each other in order to justify his own presence. And we're having to deal with that. The Iraqis are having to deal with that.

And I was impressed by their willingness to be up front about the past. And it's going to be difficult work, no question about it. There are still resentments and bitterness, and people wondering, does the future belong to them. The Sunni -- I was impressed, by the way, by the Speaker -- Denny Hastert told me I'd like him; Denny met with him. And I was impressed by him. He's a fellow that had been put in prison by Saddam and, interestingly enough, put in prison by us. And he made a decision to participate in the government. And he was an articulate person. He talked about running the parliament. It was interesting to see a person that could have been really bitter talk about the skills he's going to need to bring people together to run the parliament. And I found him to be a hopeful person.

They tell me that he wouldn't have taken my phone call a year ago -- I think I might have shared this with you at one point in time -- and there I was, sitting next to the guy. And I think he enjoyed it as much as I did. It was a refreshing moment. And the Deputy Speaker was there, as well.

Let's see here. Ann.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday while you were gone, Senator Kerry, who was your challenger in the last election --

THE PRESIDENT: I remember that.

Q You remember that. (Laughter.) He said he now regrets his votes on the war. And, actually, I think Senator Clinton at the same meeting, actually heard some boos when she said that she did not support a timetable for withdrawal. Do you see, as some of your critics do, a parallel between what's going on in Iraq now and Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Why?

THE PRESIDENT: Because there's a duly-elected government; 12 million people voted. They said, we want something different from tyranny, we want to live in a free society. And not only did they vote for a government, they voted for a constitution. Obviously, there is sectarian violence, but this is, in many ways, religious in nature, and I don't see the parallels.

You know, look -- I thought you were going to ask, do I regret what I did. Absolutely not. I made the right decision in Iraq. It's the right thing to get rid of Saddam Hussein. And now it's the right thing to stand with this government when they build a new democracy. And I reminded the Iraqi people, their democracy doesn't have to look like us. It's their country, and the government ought to reflect their traditions and their history. All we expect is people to be treated with respect and there to be self-governance in a way that tolerates differences of opinion.

Yes, Peter. Are you going to ask that question with shades on?

Q I can take them off.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm interested in the shade look, seriously.

Q All right, I'll keep it, then.

THE PRESIDENT: For the viewers, there's no sun. (Laughter.)

Q I guess it depends on your perspective. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Touch. (Laughter.)

Q Following up on the other Peter's question about Karl Rove, you said that you were relieved with what happened yesterday. But the American public, over the course of this investigation, has learned a lot about what was going on in your White House that they didn't know before, during that time, the way some people were trying to go after Joe Wilson, in some ways. I'm wondering if, over the course of this investigation, that you have learned anything that you didn't know before about what was going on in your administration. And do you have any work to do to rebuild credibility that might have been lost?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that -- first of all, the decision by the prosecutor speaks for itself. He had a full investigation. Karl Rove went in front of the grand jury like -- I don't -- a lot of times. More times than -- they took a hard look at his role.

Secondly, as I told the other Peter, I'm going to tell you, that there's an ongoing trial, it's a serious business. And I've made the comments I'm going to make about this incident, and I'm going to put this part of the situation behind us and move forward.

Let's see here -- yes, sure. Richard.

Q Mr. President, the death of Zarqawi and the formation of the new government in Iraq has given you a chance to re-engage the American people on Iraq. A majority of the people still say that the war was a mistake. Do you think that the people have turned off on Iraq? Or do you think they're still winnable back, to consider it was worth it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the people want to know, can we win? That's what they want to know. Listen, admittedly, there are a group of people in our country that say, it wasn't worth it, get out now. And that opinion is being expressed. As these campaigns start approaching you'll hear more people say, I suspect, it's a mistake, Bush shouldn't have done what he did, pull out. And that's a legitimate debate to have in America, and I look forward to the debate. I will remind the American people if we pull out before we achieve our objective, the world will be a lot more dangerous and America will be more at risk.

Then there are some in the country that say, we understand the stakes, but do they have a plan to win, can they possibly win. And I will continue to explain to the American people winning means a government that can sustain itself, defend itself and govern itself, and an ally in the war on terror, and we will help this government do that. And one of the reasons I went to Iraq was to determine whether or not we have a partner which is capable of making the tough decisions necessary to achieve our objective.

The American people have got to understand that Iraq is a part of the war on terror. Now, Richard, I fully understand how people might have made the decision that America is no longer under threat, or the lessons of September the 11th were just momentary lessons. I can understand that. But I have a responsibility to lay out what I believe, and the lessons learned from September the 11th are still an integral part of my thinking, and I'll continue to make decisions based upon the lessons.

And I know there is an international jihadist movement that desires to do us harm and they have territorial ambitions. The reason I know that is that's what they've told us. And part of their territorial ambition is to have safe haven in Iraq. That's what they've said. That's what the enemy has clearly said. And it seems like to me that the Commander-in-Chief ought to listen to what the enemy says. And they believe capitalists and democratic societies are soft and it's a matter of time before we pull out.

And that's why one message that I will continue to send to the enemy is, don't count on us leaving before the message is complete. Don't bet on it; don't bet on American politics forcing my hand, because it's not going to happen. I'm going to make decisions not based upon politics, but based upon what's best for the United States of

America.

But I understand why people, Richard, are concerned, because progress is hard to see. You know, it's one thing to say, we've got Zarqawi, that's progress; it's another thing to say, I met with the man and I believe he can make the right decisions. And so somebody is going to say, sure, well, show me. And I understand that. And I understand how tough it is for the American people to reconcile death on their TV screens with the President saying we're making incremental progress toward an important goal. But I hope they understand is how important it is we succeed in Iraq, that the country is more dangerous if we don't -- the world is more dangerous if we don't succeed.

And so I'm going to keep talking about it, and talking about -- because I believe passionately we're doing the right thing. And I've told the American people this: If I didn't think we could succeed, and if I didn't think it was worth it, I'd pull our troops out. And I mean that.

And one reason I went to Iraq yesterday, no matter how secretive the trip was, was to get a firsthand feel for how those people are thinking over there, what are they like. I understand leadership. Leadership requires determination. You've got to be determined to do something in order to be able to lead, particularly in difficult circumstances. You've got to have will. You've got to have desire to succeed. You've got to have a plan. And that's what I found in Iraq.

It's really important that the Iraqi people have no doubt in their mind that we will help this government succeed. It's important for them to understand that. And I know there's going to be different voices, and there should be different voices out of America. That's where we're great. That's what makes us interesting and great; people can say whatever they want to say, as they try to attract votes. But my voice, what you hear from me, no matter what these polls and all the business look like, is that it's worth it, it is necessary, and we will succeed.

Thank you all very much.

END 10:41 A.M. EDT

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# ATTACHMENT 5

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## **Text of the National Reconciliation and Dialogue Project Presented to the Parliament of Iraq**

**June 25, 2006**

The Prime Minister announces the National Reconciliation Project before the Parliament

- The Government of National Unity program doesn't differentiate among Iraqis except in serving the public and country.
- We lend the hand for whom build the country.
- No reconciliation with, involved in killing the innocent Iraqis.

The Prime Minister Nuri Kamil al-Maliki declared the text of the National reconciliation project before the parliament to vote.

The prime minister confirmed in his speech, that the general reform should be clear and depends on three stable bases; one completes the other, so there will be no one path in the process of general reform, first is the comprehensive mobilization in providing the requirements of strength and ability to defeat terrorists and readiness to enter the decisive war against them.

Mr. al-Maliki added: "the second dimension is a reconstruction campaign, providing services, activating the economical side, providing employment to achieve the best services; the third dimension includes the reconciliation and the national dialogue to find the chance for who want to serve the country.

He showed the disorder the terrorists, expiatory and Saddam's followers made, it is so serious and it obstructed the happiness of the fall of dictatorship. The enemies of the political process and Satellite channels in showing the scenes of destructions and blood, and the assassinations of the most significant characters in the country latest was the martyr Dr. Hadi al-Obeidi.

The Prime Minister referred to the religious clerics who are killing with no differentiation in the affiliation; the latest were the Martyrdoms Mahdi al-Attar and Yousif Al-Hassan, they are killing professors to vacate the



country from the facultative and they target the children, women, workers, old men and all the slices of society.

He confirmed the necessity to stand against that ugly picture in different ways and plans to confront terrorism between force and firmness, dialogue and reconciliation for whom wants to join the political process to build Iraq and rescue its people if he doesn't commit any crime of murder or sabotage.

He also reminded not misunderstand the release of the reconciliation initiative as honoring to the criminals and murders saying that: "no, we don't peace them till they get punishment by the fair justice".

We hope that initiative can move with who realized that there is no future of the opposition the political process after the national elections, constitution and the government of National unity.

Mr. Nuri al-Maliki showed the program of government became clear and no difference between Iraq and other, the preference among Iraqis depends on who presents more and better to his people and country, he cleared: "we realize there is group rebelled on the right and mind, passed the way of devil and embraced by misleading institutions and the intelligence departments continue their work". He added: "we shake hands to whom want build the country", and who insist on aggression and terrorism we will take a legal firm attitude to protect our people and country.

The following is the whole text of the National Reconciliation and Dialogue project:

In The Name of God

The National Reconciliation and Dialogue project

In order to confirm the coherence between the Iraqi people, establishing the basis of national unity among their different components, to treat the remains of terrorism and administrative corruption, spreading the spirit of the loyal nationality to Iraq in order to build wide national front to confront challenges and to regain the pioneer position of Iraq regionally and internationally ...for all that we release the initiative of national reconciliation and dialogue that depends on two basic elements:

1- The reliable procedure.

## 2- Principles and required policies.

### First: procedures

- A- Forming national head committee (the head National Committee of National Reconciliation and Dialogue project) contains representatives from the three authorities, the state minister of the national dialogue and representatives from the parliamentary slates.
- B- Forming sub-committees in the governorates by the head national committee, it takes over the tasks of the committee to expand the reconciliation horizontally.
- C- Forming field committees to put horizontal cultural and media conceptions, follow up the process of reconciliation and evaluating it stages.
- D- Held conferences for the different slices of life such as:
  - 1. Conference to the religious leaders to support the reconciliation process and announcing (Fatwa) to convince people.
  - 2. Conference to the heads of tribes issues covenant of honor to confront the state fighting and fighting terrorism.
  - 3. Conference to the effective political parties pledge to support the government, protect the political process and confront the terrorist challenge and corruption.
  - 4. Calling all the NGOs to carry out activities, conferences, education campaigns to achieve the aims of reconciliation plan.

### Second: the principles and policies required

- 1. Adopting a political reasonable address by the political powers that take part in the political process, and by the government to bring back the alternating currents and to achieve media neutralism.
- 2. Adopting an honest national dialogue in dealing with all political visions and stances, which are opposite to those of the government in the political process.

3. Adopting the legal and constitutional legitimacy to solve the country's problems and to put an end to the assassination phenomenon.
4. The political powers, involved in the government should take a rejecting stance against the terrorists and Saddam's followers.
5. Issuing an amnesty to the prisoners who are not involved in crimes against humanity or terrorist acts and forming committees to set them free immediately. The insurgent who seeks to gain the amnesty opportunity has to denounce violence, support the national government and to obey the rule of law.
6. Preventing human rights violations, working on reforming the prisons and punishing those responsible for torture crimes and allowing the international organizations to visit the prisons.
7. Dealing with the MNF to put mechanisms to prevent human rights violations and the civilians' abuses through military operations.
8. Finding solutions for the personnel of the dissolved departments, especially in relation to economic part and to take benefits of their expertise.
9. Reconsidering the Debaathification Board according to the Constitution, the judicial authorities and the Law to take a constitutional and vocational pattern.
10. Taking prompt procedures to improve the services, especially in the hot areas.
11. Activating the preparatory committees, emanated from the Cairo Conference for National Accord, in coordination with the UN and the Arab League and encouraging the Baghdad Peace Initiation.
12. The government should make a balanced Islamic-Arabic-Regional movement to make the other government be acquainted with what is going on in Iraq and gain their support to the National Accord Process, especially those enhancing terrorism or overlooking it.
13. Taking a serious and quick step towards establishing the armed forces which will take the responsibility of managing Iraq's security in preparation of withdrawal of the MNF.

14. Taking a serious and quick step towards establishing the armed forces in both Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior on professional and national bases for they will take the responsibility of managing Iraq's security instead of the MNF before they withdraw.

15. Activating the decisions that support victims of the former regime through compensations and making available all potentials to improve their living standards all over Iraq.

16. Removing all obstacles facing the Iraqi citizens or organizations to take part in building Iraq according to the Constitution if they did not commit any crime.

17. Giving compensations for those who have been suffering from terrorist acts, military operations or violence.

18. Activating the role of judiciary to punish the criminals, making it the only reference in dealing with crimes, former regime's top officials, terrorists and gangs of kidnapping and killing.


19. Making the armed forces independent on the influence of the competing political powers, disbanding the militias and illegal armed groups and treat them according to politics, economy and security.

20. Gathering the visions and stances towards the anti-Iraq terrorist and expiatory groups.


21. Starting a wide-scaled construction campaign all over Iraq to treat the unemployment phenomenon.

22. The elections led to the forming Parliament, constitution and a government of national unity as the only legal representative of the Iraqi peoples' will in dealing with sovereignty and the existence of MNF.

23. Make the deportees get back home. The government and the security systems are responsible for their return and safety to prevent the terrorists from harming them in addition to compensating them for all the damages they have and adopt a firm security plan that ensures protecting people and prevents them from being subject to blackmail.



24. Search and arrest operations happen according to judiciary orders before the raid or arrest. These orders should follow certain information, not vexatious one and should be in conformity with human rights. The military operations should also occur on the basis of official orders



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